

Hello my name is Renee. Esposito

I am a 61 year old homeowner in Barre, Vt. I have been continuously diagnosed with multiple spinal degenerative diseases, COPD and various other illnesses as well. I've had numerous neck and back surgeries beginning at 30 years old and Presently In need of several more surgeries on my back and neck that I cannot afford. I am also suffering with c-diff for the third time in the past year and a half, c-diff is a super bug affecting the colon and intestines and is a very deadly disease that is most often found in elderly and folks considered high risk. Due to my illness, I have asked that my statement be read tonight so that I can share my story.

I was a hard working single mother supporting myself and three children to adulthood without any child support. Laws In Vermont were not as harsh as they are now, and receiving any pay from my children's father was a dead end. My work history is colorful. I am a self made independent women who worked as an Artist throughout my life. I spent a decade guiding emotionally supporting and teaching life skills to disadvantaged teens through WCMHS. I busted my way through cosmetology school and worked as a hairdresser in my local community. I worked as a customed art framer at a friends successful self made framing shop. This is only a few of the dozen or more jobs and careers I've had and worked throughout the years. Currently I do I Ching readings, which is similar to Tarot readings, for fun and socialization really because I don't make enough to even claim them on my tax returns. But would like to add that as little as I make, I pay Sales and Use tax, just sent a check yesterday. I was honored to have sold my art at the gift shop here at the State House for many years. I miss having the physical ability to give back within my community, as well as being able to support myself. Being ill is not something anyone aspires to be, certainly not myself.

For the past six years I have lived on \$846.00 a month from Social Security Disability. This is obviously not enough to pay my bills, let alone my medical needs, food, gas, and heating fuel to name a few. I am in credit card debt because I am a homeowner.... Because of an IRA which wasn't much, I was just over the limit and not eligible for fuel assistance, food stamps, Medicaid etc. That IRA ran out in November 2017. I have struggled before and since meaning I have no choice but to apply for these benefits once I get my tax returns done. However, even with these benefits, because I am in credit card debt, and have no means to pay them back, or have money for upkeep on my home, I will be selling my home this coming spring. Selling my home will put me in the position of using any money left after paying my debt, to survive on. If my math is correct I'm lucky if it will take me two years to be right back where I am now. Without my home.

I have the added burden of caring for my adult son, who has MRSA. He spent from May until October at Burlington hospital having multiple surgeries removing bones and tissue because the MRSA entered is marrow. He continues ongoing treatment for MRSA, hospital visits, home health visits and he cannot physically work for up to the next year. Possibly never. We both struggle with illness and not having enough money for food or to pay bills. I'd like to add, that if it were not for Medicaid my son would definitely be dead today.

HHHC 2018-96 1/23/18 Public hearing

He almost lost his life in July due to the MSRA and if it wasn't for Medicare I would most likely be dead myself. MRSA and C-Diff are both extremely serious and deadly illnesses that many lack knowledge of. Both are spread through hospitals throughout the world each and every day.

As I said, I have c- diff, my copay for this med two weeks ago was \$500 for the generic brand of medication. With the help of my doctors office and the Council for Aging in Barre I was able to get my med free of charge. They also went above and beyond for me. Driving to Colchester to get this medication at a reduced cost because my car is as decrepit as myself. I will soon be having more tests done to see where the illness is at and that will be out of pocket. Again, something I will not be able to afford, and will be forced to go further into credit card debt.

I am asking that Vermont law makers continue to fight for the healthcare needs for Vermonters. I am asking them to diligently work toward a Medicare system for all disabled people like myself, my son, the elderly and low income people who should not have to sell their home or not pay their rent or buy food, in order to pay for medical care.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my story.

Sincerely,

Renee Esposito